

1852.

VICTORIA.

PORTLAND BAY DISTRICT.

**PETITION.**

*Ordered by the Council to be printed 17th. September, 1852.*

TO THE HONORABLE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF VICTORIA.

*The Petition of the Inhabitants of the Town and District of Portland Bay,*  
HUMBLY SHEWETH—

THAT the Town and District of Portland Bay yearly contribute many thousands of pounds to the Public Revenue of the Colony of Victoria. The Customs' Revenue from the Port of Portland is several thousands of pounds annually. The Licenses and Assessments of Stock in the District of Portland Bay amount to several thousands of pounds annually; and the Land Sales held in the Police Office, Portland, have realised tens of thousands in the year, and would have realised much more had the Land Sales been held as frequently and to as large an extent in comparison with other parts of the Colony, as this District is equitably entitled to.

That the Town and District of Portland Bay, and the Western District generally, have suffered for many years, and been greatly retarded in progress by the withholding, on the part of the Colonial Government, from this side of the Colony, a fair share of attention to our wants, and of public expenditure to meet them. In particular, your Memorialists would instance, amongst other things, the infrequency and irregularity of Government Land Sales in this District; the withholding of a fair share of Immigration to this Port, which, though conducted at the expense of the Public Revenue, to which this part of the Colony has so largely contributed, has, till very lately, been wholly absorbed by the Eastern Districts; and the protracted neglect, even up to this day, inadequately providing our District with bridges and passable roads, and our Town with suitable streets, and adequate convenience for our Shipping.

That, while other parts of the Colony of Victoria have so largely benefitted by separation, that measure has not yet brought to this District any thorough improvement of its condition, or a just measure of regard to its public wants, in particular. That, although a Circuit Court has been at last established, it has been under such restrictions as have greatly detracted from the benefit of that measure, for while in Geelong that Court is held four times a-year, in Portland it is only held once in six months, and moreover, the limits of jurisdiction to the Portland Circuit Court have been so contracted as to exclude a large population in the neighbouring Towns of Belfast and Warnambool from participation in the benefits of that measure.

That although this Town has been established now for about twelve years, there has not, till within the last nine months, been a single vessel with Immigrants direct from Britain, arrive at this Port, and as yet we have received only three; whilst tens and scores of vessels have arrived at Melbourne and Geelong at the expense, in a great measure, of the revenues derived from this Town and District. The avidity with which those Immigrants who have hitherto arrived here have been hired, and the high rate of wages obtained, show how much these and many more have long been needed. Your Petitioners learn, through public intelligence from Great Britain, that it was mainly owing to the representations of Captain Stanley Carr, that the Emigration Commissioners have despatched these vessels to this Port; and seeing how easily the representations, even of a private individual in the right quarter, have obtained this measure of justice for our District, your Petitioners are left to the painful conclusion that the cause of Immigrants being so long withheld from Portland Bay, has been the failure of the Public Authorities in the Colony in bringing under the notice of the Home Authorities its wants and just claims in this respect. Neither can your Petitioners be satisfied of receiving due justice, whilst they are unassured that Immigrant Ships will be sent to this Port constantly, and at regular intervals, and in fair proportion with the numbers sent to other Ports.

That your Petitioners observe His Excellency has consented, in accordance with an address of the Legislative Council, to hold Land Sales in Melbourne once a month, and yet no allusion has been made to the Land Sale wants of this District, nor any hope held out that lands here are to be put up with any more frequency and regularity than hitherto.

That your Petitioners are not aware that in any one year, not even the year since separation, has so much of the Public Revenue been appropriated to the necessities and improvement of this District, even for the purpose of roads and bridges, as half of what was lately granted as a surplus gratuity to the Corporation of Melbourne. And while your Petitioners would not grudge any measure of participation in the Public Expenditure to any part of the Colony, consistent with justice to other parts, they cannot but think that the necessities of a large and important portion of the Colony, extending over many miles of country, and, as yet,

unprovided with roads and bridges, so necessary for the security of property and of life, has a prior claim upon the Public Revenue to the Corporation of an individual town.

Your Petitioners have learnt that the sum of £1000 has lately been granted to certain Memorialists in Portland towards the repair of roads and bridges. In the view of the fact of a gratuity of £10,000, lately granted to the Corporation of Melbourne, and £6,000 to that of Geelong, your Petitioners can regard it only as showing a marked want of consideration for the destitute condition of this side of the Colony, to put off with £1000 for so urgent and extensive a work as the forming of a line of communication between the Interior and our Port Town.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that your Honorable House will extend a just regard to the Western part of the Colony of Victoria, and will approve of a due proportion of Public Expenditure being appropriated to Public Works in the Town and District of Portland Bay. More particularly, that your Honorable House will address His Excellency requesting he will at once direct the providing of this District with a thoroughly made main line of road, and substantial and durable bridges; and should His Excellency place on the Estimates, for this and other Public Works in the Town and District of Portland Bay, a sum of money somewhat compensating for the long accumulated arrears of Public Expenditure due to this side of the Colony, and somewhat adequate to the larger requirements and juster claims of this extensive District from the Public Revenue, than the Corporation of an individual town—that your Honorable House will approve of the same.

And your Petitioners will ever pray :

3rd August, 1852.

(Here follow 92 Signatures.)